

Making a Difference

Description



One of the sponsors for the yarn crawl last week was [The Vineyard Marketplace](#) in San Marcos. It is the store component of True Vineyard Ministries, Inc. My friend Tina and I visited the store on Friday morning. We were amazed at all the wonderful merchandise on display. Granted we were there for the yarn but we also checked off several items on our holiday gift list and extras for ourselves, including jewelry made by women in Ethiopia from recycled artillery shell casings. The women collect them, melt them down, make beads and then make jewelry.

True Vineyard is a member of the Fair Trade Federation so everything in their store helps the communities from which they come. Each thing for sale has a story. I really liked that. Those stories are shared by the folks in the store and also on the shop website when you click to buy!



True Vineyard also employs women in Rwanda to care for a flock of merino sheep and use their fleece to spin and dye into merino wool yarn. This is for many of the women, the first time they have been employed and received a paycheck. When they first started packaging the yarn the women wound it in a football shape; not our usual way of receiving it but very cute. Now most of it comes in the usual skein or cake form. The yarns you see to the right are, on the left, dyed using avocados and, on the right, the legumes from the mimosa tree. The third in my stash now is dyed using madder root. And as I was googling this, I was reminded that madder root has long been used for dyeing things with a reddish, rosy tint. Aveda even has a shampoo for us red-heads to fortify our hair. I might have to go get some!



They work with women in Ethiopia to hand spin the locally grown cotton into yarn. The yarn is then sent to Rwanda where it is plyed and dyed using area plants. My cotton choices (shown at left) were three different skeins of color, all using Cosmos flowers. Amazing the different shades they achieved with the same plant. The cotton yarn is a new adventure so isn't on the website yet, but the page of wool yarn shows the skein of yarn next to the plant used in the dyeing process. What a great visual; many of the plants they use are familiar but may have different names in Rwanda.

I've found and brought home other yarns that were dyed using local plants. Being a gardener and having accidentally dyed myself when out working, the yarns I've brought home make me smile and

think of far-away gardens.



Display of the cotton yarn from Ethiopia

There are several short videos on You Tube about the outreach True Vineyard is doing in Rwanda. [Dreams](#) presents many of the women in the program and this next one, that's titled [True Vineyard Ministries 2011](#) is a montage of the yarn making process.

It was, for me, a powerful experience to be in their store, talk with those working or volunteering there and hear the stories of the women in Rwanda and other parts of the continent that this organization is helping.

Category

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